

## **GRSMMP Conference Call 14 November, 2007 - Notes**

1. A GRSMMP conference call was held on November 14, 2007. Participants in the conference call included Syed Khalil (LA), Carl Ferraro (AL), George Ramseur (MS), Kris Benson (NOAA), John Bowie (EPA), Drew Puffer (EPA), Bruce Baird (MMS), Jim Murphy (DOT), Rafael Calderon (TNC) Bob Heinly (COE, Galveston), Matt Schrader (COE, Jacksonville), Lynn Martin (COE, IWR), and Larry Parson (COE, Mobile). The conference call agenda was as follows:

### **Old Business**

- Questionnaires

### **Upcoming Events**

- LA Sand Management Working Group Meeting
- LA Interagency RSM GIS Kickoff Meeting

### **Focus Area Status Updates**

- Other Focus Areas Activities
- Ecological Components
- Workshop

2. The meeting started with some old familiar business with the status of the questionnaires. Responses from Louisiana and Alabama have been received and still waiting on Texas, Mississippi, and Florida to submit their responses. It was asked that the states keep a focus on providing their responses.

3. Next on the agenda was the announcement of some activities and upcoming meetings related to RSM.

- Louisiana Sand Management Working Group Meeting. Nov 29, Lindy Boggs Convention Center. The meeting was organized by the MMS and addresses issues associated with sand leases, potential uses of the offshore sediments, and related environmental studies. Syed Khalil indicated that information relating to work on Ship Shoal studies including sediment characterization, volumes, potential uses, and environmental evaluations will be addressed. It was pointed out that this information coming out of this working group should be integrated into the GRSMMP as appropriate.
- Louisiana Interagency RSM GIS Kickoff Meeting. The New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers (MVN) and the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources (LADNR) are hosting a meeting to identify interest by other Louisiana agencies to participate in providing links to their geospatial data for inclusion into a web mapping services medium or a website. The meeting is also intended to provide a forum to brainstorm ideas to develop a preliminary implementation plan that captures agencies needs for an interagency GIS portal. The goal of the Interagency GIS is to create a robust data inventory that crosses organizational boundaries in order to become more efficient and effective in managing sediments in Louisiana.

- The state Coastal Impact Assistance Plans (CIAP) are being developed and submitted to MMS. Once approved, they can be shared with the GRSMMP team. The plan submitted by Texas has a number of proposed projects that involve sediment. Kris Benson suggested that the projects proposed be examined relative to a regional sediment management plan. If this is not possible, perhaps the GRSMMP team may at least be able to comment on their likely sediment system implications.

#### 4. Focus area status updates:

- Sediment Inventory – Jeff Williams and Juan have been contacting the other states to get their POCs and to find out what other state agencies have a need and deal with identifying offshore sediment resources and inventories. Syed Khalil raised a potential policy issue that Louisiana is dealing with sediment resource management at offshore borrow sites. There is not good coordination between multiple users of offshore sand borrow areas. Initial users have the advantage of extracting the most easily accessible sediment from the borrow source which may adversely affect the availability of the remaining material to future users. Syed referenced an example of a borrow site for Pelican Island. Larry Parson noted that the State of Florida, Bureau of Beaches and Coastal System under DEP has regulations pertaining to offshore borrow area that requires users to submit a management plan outlining how material will be used so that it does not impact the remaining material for future users. Syed is working on a paper on “borrow area management plans” for Louisiana which will be useful in the GRSMMP. Larry will get with DEP to see if some of this information can be shared with Louisiana.
- Sediment Budget – Syed Khalil is working with Jeff Waters to incorporate previous sediment budget works into the Sediment Budget Analysis System (SBAS). This will be used in identifying existing sediment budgets, confidence levels, and data gaps.
- Dredging Activities – District dredging information has been sent to Rose Dopsovic and input into a central database. As soon as the link to the web page is approved for release, Larry will send to the group, and ask for team review and recommendations on how to improve.
- Information Management. There was a conference call with the PHINS development team back in September. They are ready to assist the GRSMMP efforts. Perhaps a place to start with is the sediment resources inventory and the dredged material focus areas. Once the GRSMMP team identifies what information is ready for incorporation into PHINS, the PHINS team will provide guidance.
- Ecological Components. Rafael Calderon, Carl Ferraro, and Larry Parson met and proposed a strategy for this focus area. This focus area will integrate the information from the other focus area workgroups into the ecological considerations. It becomes apparent that ecological processes are affected and must be considered and accounted for in the RSM approach. Such processes not only deal the obvious threatened and endangered species, critical habitats, and contamination issues but must consider what

happens when regional sediment dynamics are modified in relation to the regional ecology. This focus area proposes to examine the material from the sediment process, sediment sources, and dredging/beneficial use groups to help develop guidelines for minimizing adverse ecological effects and perhaps enhance positive ones. It is proposed that the other focus area groups provide interim report outs to the ecological considerations group to pass on information important to their guidelines. Feed back from across the GRSMMP team that might help inform the near-term and long range work of this focus area is also needed. The workgroup identified the need to consider that the Gulf is defined by different regional habitats, sediment processes, and geomorphic characteristics. It may be useful to define sub-regions along the Gulf coast when considering regional approaches. Suggested sub-regions include:

- Eastern - Florida Gulf coast to Perdido Pass
  - Central - Perdido Pass westward including the Achafalaya to Texas border
  - West - Texas and on
- To get the Ecological Components work group underway and bring together the work of the other focus areas, a workshop is proposed for February/March timeframe in New Orleans. It is proposed that this meeting initiate the process for the GRSMMP team to draft an interim plan document and lay out next steps for the preparation of the final product. Scheduling and planning the workshop will be addressed at the next GRSMMP conference call.

5. Discussions were directed towards on identifying and obtaining funding to support the workshop and other efforts. Possibilities discussed were:

- GoMex Program – RFP should come out soon
- GoMex Foundation may be able to help with State travel and logistics though the grant they received. Subsequent correspondence has indicated that the Foundation may be able to provide some funding for the states to support the proposed workshop. The week of March 24, 2008 has been set as a tentative date for the workshop.

It was expressed that this workshop should coordinated with the larger RRCT, which is planning a workshop around the same time to review the draft policy issues paper that is being developed from the round-robbin workshops hosted by the states.

6. The next GRSMMP conference call is scheduled for December 13, at 1:30 central.